

# WHAT'S Line

Alabama Public Library Service  
Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

Vol. 33 No. 2

[www.statelibrary.alabama.gov](http://www.statelibrary.alabama.gov)

Winter 2011

## The Pratt-Smoot Act at 80

John Russell Young, the Librarian of Congress, developed the concept of a national library service for the blind in 1897 when he established a reading room for the blind with about 500 books and music items in raised characters. In 1913, Congress provided that one copy of each book in raised characters made for educational purposes was to be deposited in the Library of Congress.

In 1930, Representative Ruth Pratt and Senator Reed Smoot introduced identical bills in Congress. Each asked for adequate service on a national scale through an appropriation to be extended under the direction of the Librarian of Congress. The Pratt-Smoot Act of 1931, as it became known, allocated \$100,000 to provide books for blind adults. This created the Books for the Adult Blind program, which evolved into the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS). Over the years, it has grown to serve blind adults and children as well as handicapped individuals. The program now includes music-instruction, large-print and braille scores. Circulation has increased from 157 books in 1931 to over 24 million currently reaching over 800,000 patrons.

Ruth Sears Baker Pratt was the first female representative from New York and served from 1929-1933.

Reed Smoot served as senator from Utah from 1903-1933.

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## RC Production: The End of an Era

With the start of the new year, NLS will no longer be producing books in the recorded cassette format. This signals the final shift to digital books. NLS continues to convert many older titles from cassette to digital formats. Only a few will be left out due to out-of-date information (i.e. medical books) or those for which the original master could not be used for conversion. Some books will be converted to BARD only as digital books. As these DB titles are added, NLS will notify the regional library.

Cassette users should not panic though. There are still thousands of RC titles with multiple copies available for circulation. The majority of magazine titles are continuing in cassette format as well.



## Welcome the Newest BPH Reader Advisor

### Ken Herston

Ken hales from Florence, Alabama. He is a Graduate of the University of Alabama with a Master's degree in Library and Information Science. With an excellent literary background and many years of customer service experience, Ken is ready to help you with your reading needs.

To contact Ken

**800-392-5671 (toll free)**

334-213-3903 (local)

kherston@apls.state.al.us

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## Things to Remember in BARD

When we get the acceptance e-mail from BARD letting us know we are ready to begin downloading, we get as excited as a kid at Christmas. All the books we could ever want are at our fingertips--anytime and anywhere as long as we have a supported player. However, in our excitement, we tend to forget a few things:

- In BARD the books are placed in a compressed zipped file. This makes the file smaller and allows it to download more quickly. In order to play the book you must open your file. Make sure you right click the title of the book that you have downloaded and unzip it before you place the book on the flash drive and put it in your player.
- If you get a notice when logging on that your password is incorrect be sure that the CAPS LOCK key is off. This key is located above the shift key on the left side of the keyboard. You can toggle back and forth but if you use all caps the password will not work.
- Remember, the website is <https://nlsbard.loc.gov>. Do not use www or http.
- At log in, you may be prompted to accept the agreement pledge (even though you may have already done this at a previous log in). Be sure to do so again or it will throw you out. If thrown out, it closes the BARD website and you will have to start your session over.
- Even though BARD stands for Braille and Audio Reading Download, currently there is no braille on the site. They have not merged the WebBraille titles with this download site yet. They are available as a separate entity through NLS.
- If you download a book, go through the steps to extract it and immediately hear "End of Book," the file may be corrupted. Before panicking, try downloading the file again, follow the extraction steps. Often that will fix it.
- The digital book player cannot be plugged directly to the computer. You must instead use a flash drive purchased from a local store, order one online, or use a blank DB cartridge purchased from various retailers.

- In a few instances there have been cartridge errors with some flash drives when you download and put the book in the player. Some drives are just not recognized by the NLS player. However, there is a workaround that will alleviate the problem in most cases. When the player is turned on and you get the cartridge error, hold down the play button on the standard player (or the diamond shaped Info button on the advanced player) to bring up the user guide. Once it starts to read pop the drive out and then back in. This will close the user guide, rescan the drive and start reading your book.
- When searching on the site you can search via author, title, category or keyword. This will usually allow you to locate books of interest with ease.
- If you have a purchased player such as the Victor Reader Stream, Book Port Plus or the Book Sense, you need to get an authorization key that NLS and the cooperating company will provide for you before downloading. Without this “key” the download will not play.

These are just a few suggestions of things to remember in downloading books from BARD. Check with us periodically for more tidbits, news and words of wisdom related to use of BARD. Contact us at **1-800-391-5672** if you have further questions.

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### **!!! DBM ALERT !!!**

**Remember to check your battery level occasionally to see if your machine needs recharging. To find out the level of charge, power the machine on, then press power again. If less than 5 hours of charge remains, plug in the machine to recharge. You can still use the machine during this time. If the battery power drops below 1 hour, your machine may not recharge. If this happens, call us and we will help you.**

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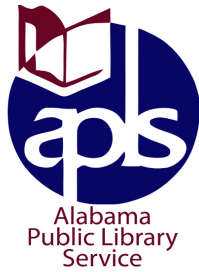
### **GET YOUR NEW PLAYER TODAY!!**

We have tried to reach all of our patrons about the new digital player and the new book format. If you have not received a call from us or the new player, contact us immediately. We need to tell you about this exciting new technology in listening.

To those who have the players, let us know if you have any questions. Some of you may want to try the advanced version of the digital player. Let us know and we can explain the differences to you and help you decide if you need the advanced player or not. Others are learning to download books through the NLS BARD program.

We are encouraging everyone to keep both their cassette player and digital player until more DB books are available. Currently, magazines are only available in the cassette format.





**Regional Library for the  
Blind and Physically  
Handicapped  
6030 Monticello Drive  
Montgomery, AL 36130**

Free Material for  
the Blind and  
Physically  
Handicapped

Address Service Requested

## WhAT's Line

Published quarterly by the Alabama Public Library Service  
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**Director**  
Rebecca S. Mitchell

**Regional Librarian**  
Fara Zaleski

**Editor**  
Dana Barlow

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## Contact

### Information:

**Toll Free**  
**1-800-392-5671**

**Local**  
**334-213-3906**

Fara Zaleski, Regional Librarian

[fzaleski@apls.state.al.us](mailto:fzaleski@apls.state.al.us)

Mike Coleman, Reader Advisor

[mcoleman@apls.state.al.us](mailto:mcoleman@apls.state.al.us)

Tim Emmons, Reader Advisor

[temmons@apls.state.al.us](mailto:temmons@apls.state.al.us)

Ken Herston, Reader Advisor

[kherston@apls.state.al.us](mailto:kherston@apls.state.al.us)

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